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Reporter's notebook: at the White House, jeans are out and neckties are clinched up

by Terence Smith
Special to the New York Times

WASHINGTON, July 26—The most conspicuous symbol of the revamped Carter White House—the "new, improved 1980 model," as one staff member described it with a smile this week—is the necktie.

Hamilton Jordan, the man who made jeans and boots chic in the West Wing, has not been seen in public without one since he was officially installed as chief of staff last week. The dark blue suit or, occasionally, a blue blazer and slacks has become the standard uniform now, both for Mr. Jordan and other members of the staff. Neckties are no longer at half-mast, in keeping with Mr. Carter's dictum to his staff to cinch up or ship out.

"No one really had to tell us to dress more formally," said one staffer, wilting in the heat of the Washington summer in his sincere suit. "It just seemed an obvious form of job insurance."

The unofficial dress code has even affected Jody Powell, the press secretary, who in the past often appeared at the daily briefings for reporters in loosened tie and rolled up shirt-sleeves. His jacket has been on every day this week, despite a malfunctioning air-

conditioning unit that has kept the temperature in the press room in the high 80's.

His terminology has undergone a change as well. He no longer speaks of "Hamilton" or "Ham" in describing the role and functions of the new chief of staff. It is "Mr. Jordan" now.

Along with the dark suits and new title, Mr. Jordan has been forced to regularize his notoriously erratic office hours as part of the post-shakeup regimen. Each day this week, for example, he has convened a meeting of the White House senior staff at 8:30 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room. The 30-minute meetings have been crisp and businesslike, according to one participant, "and there has been no doubt in anyone's mind as to who's in charge."

Mr. Jordan now is spending more time with the President and at staff meetings. He is also meeting with a wide range of people outside the White House, people he conspicuously ignored in the past.

There have been courtesy calls on Capitol Hill, for example, and

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private lunches and meetings with such established Washington Brahmins as Clark M. Clifford and Sol M. Linowitz. "He's trying to plug in—fast," an aide explained.

Mr. Jordan's staff will be enlarged as well. A new Washington-wise deputy is expected to be named shortly, in addition to Leslie C. Francis, a Congressional liaison officer, who will serve as an administrative assistant. The new chief of staff will also get more secretarial help. For the past few frantic weeks, in which Mr. Jordan has been besieged by callers and interview requests, his secretary and confidential assistant, Eleanor Connors, have had two White House volunteers answering the constantly ringing phones.

During his deliberations at Camp David earlier this month, Jimmy Carter reached a number of conclusions about the way he was handling his Presidency. One was that he was wasting his time, or about 40 percent of it.

That is the percentage of Presidential time that was committed in the pre-Camp David days to regularly scheduled weekly meetings with budget and staff aides, department heads, and the like. Reviewing them, Mr. Carter and his schedulers decided last week that many of the sessions could be eliminated, others could be switched to a twice month basis and some could be handled by Mr. Jordan.

Under the new arrangement, Mr. Carter is to be free to leave the Oval Office more frequently and travel outside Washington at least once a week. He has told visitors to the White House that he intends to move around the country as much as possible in an effort to re-

establish the direct contact with the public he had during the 1976 campaign.

That is the President's goal, but some of his closest advisers are frankly skeptical that he will fulfill it.

"I know him too well," a senior Administration official said today. "He just can't let go of the detail. He is constantly fascinated with the machinery, the gears and the inner workings. He has trouble stepping back from it all."

Mr. Carter startled many on the White House staff with one of his answers at last night's nationally televised news conference. With an almost defiant note in his voice, he said he had "no apology" to make for the suddenness of his Cabinet shake-up nor the ways in which the affair had been handled.

Just 48 hours earlier, in the same room, the President had told a gathering of several hundred White House staffers that he frankly regretted the mass resignation offer from his Cabinet and senior staff that caused such a tumult when it was announced the week before. It had been a mistake, he said, that provoked needless uncertainty and damaging headlines.

Mr. Carter had spoken so candidly on this point on Monday, the staffers said, that they fully expected him to acknowledge his regret about that aspect of the shake-up at the news conference yesterday.

"I think the American people would have reacted positively to a public admission that it was a mistake," one senior advisor said. "But for whatever reason, he decided not to make it."

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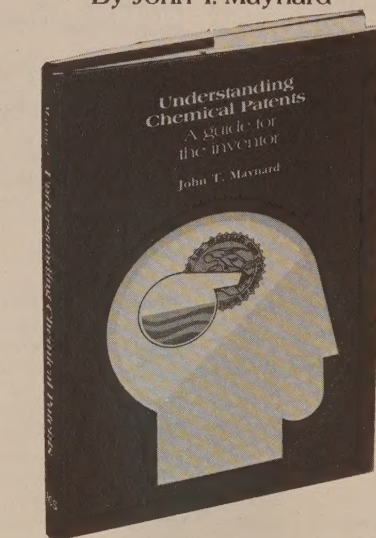
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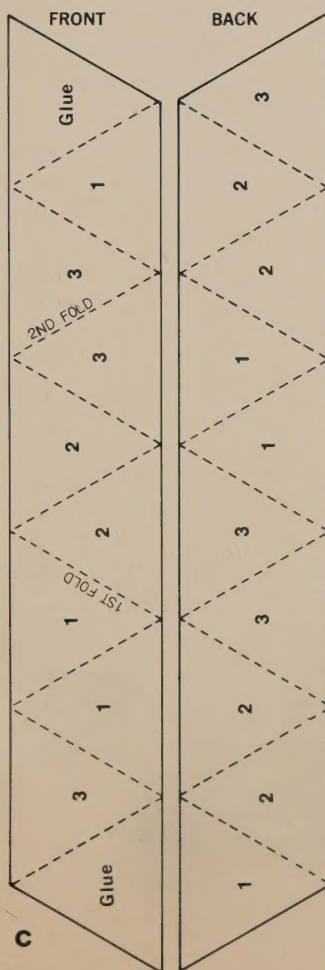
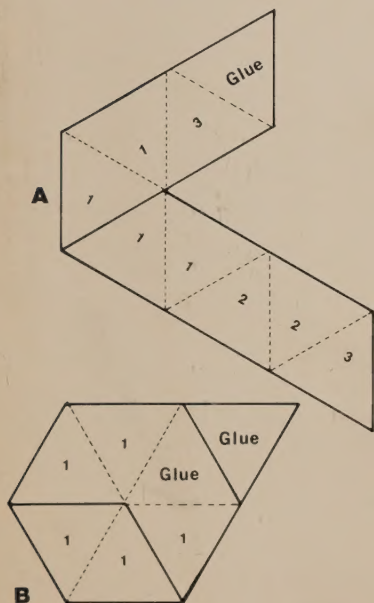
The Last Word

The Mobius Strip, a figure that has only one surface, has been toyed with by many for years. You make it by taking a piece of paper, giving it a half twist and pasting one end to the other. See, if you put your finger on the outside and run it around . . . you end up on the . . . inside. We knew that and we also knew what happens when you cut a Mobius Strip all the way 'round (perpendicular to the seam). In fact, we even cut a cut Mobius Strip. What we didn't know is what happens when you cut a hexaflexagon in half. But we're ahead of ourselves. First, we have to tell you what a hexaflexagon is. It's a plane figure with three surfaces . . . really. Here's how to make one.

Cut the strip on the right side of the page and *carefully* fold and crease it so you have ten equilateral triangles lying on top of each other. Then unfold the strip and make a hexagon by running along for two triangles, then fold, then two more triangles, then fold again, and two more, so you're back where you started. Glue

the two overlapping end triangles, one atop the other. There you have it. So? Now pinch together two adjacent triangles, and two more, and the last two, so you have a kind of pyramid. Then poke at the free edges and open *from the center*. If you do it right, it will go *FLEX* and the inside will become the outside, and the outside will become the inside. Look carefully before you repeat the operation. You can do it over and over, either forward or backward. (We'll leave to the reader what that means.)

If you want to know more about hexaflexagons, by all means look up Martin Gardner's book, "The Scientific American Book of Mathematical Puzzles and Diversions". (Thanks to Bob Nash of the Rochester, New York, Section of ACS for having reminded us about these cute gadgets in *CHEMmunications*. He's made some dandies by paste-up and Xerox. Incidentally, feel free to photocopy this one.)



Chemists successfully completing these instructions will be awarded an honorary engineering degree.



